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ABSTRACT

Both English and Finnish make use of a category called the passive voice. In most cases these passives correspond to each other, but both are subject to restrictions. This paper attempts to determine how English passives overlap with the semantic area covered by the Finnish passive and what the choices are which face a speaker of Finnish in expressing in English an idea containing an actor who is an implied indefinite person. Among the several characteristics of the Finnish passive, the most striking is the fact that both transitive and intransitive verbs can occur in the passive, whereas in English this is only the case for transitive verbs. Indefinite subjects in English present five choices, "they," "you," "we," "people," or "one," which are conditioned by the speech situation. In addition, "there+be+NP" can be used to fill the subject slot in English, but this is not always translatable by the passive in Finnish. The Finnish passive often corresponds to an English active construction with an instrument, locative, or objective in the surface subject slot. Some "actions" which are realized in Finnish in the passive are considered "events" in English and are realized in the active voice. Implications are discussed for teaching the English equivalents of the Finnish passive. (AM)

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THE EQUIVALENTS OF THE FINNISH PASSIVE VOICE IN ENGLISH.

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Both English and Finnish make use of a category which is called the passive voice. In most cases the passives correspond to each other, but both languages impose a number of restrictions. In this paper, the point of departure is the Finnish passive. An attempt will be made to find out how the English language dissects the semantic area covered by the Finnish passive and which are the choices facing a speaker of Finnish when he wants to express in English an idea containing an actor who is an implied indefinite person.

The morpheme of the Finnish passive /ta/ is found between the verb stem and the personal ending:¹

ote/ta/an

The passive morpheme has the following main allomorphs, which depend on the shape of the verb: *ta, tä, ti, tti, da, dā, tta, ttä* (Penttilä 1963: 243-7 and Tauli 1966:165). The verbs below illustrate the form of the passive verb.

haka/ta/an	'is being beaten'
syöte/tä/än	'is being fed'
juo/ti/in	'was drunk'
lue/tti/in	'was read'
juo/da/an	'is drunk'
syö/dä/än	'is eaten'
ote/tta/ne/en	'may be taken'
syöte/ttä/isi/in	'would be fed'

The Finnish passive has five characteristics which are not shared by its English counterpart. Firstly, it is unipersonal, i.e. the verb has only one form for all the six persons: *minut, sinut, hänet, meidät, teidät, heidät vietiin ulos* 'I, you, he, we, you, they was/were taken out'.

¹ The personal ending of the passive verb consists of a vowel plus *n*. The vowel is the same as that of the passive allomorph except when preceded by the morpheme of the potential /ne/ or conditional /isi/.

Secondly, instead of having a subject in the nominative, similar to the pronoun *I* in *I was taken out*, the passive verb takes an object in the accusative case: *Minut vietiin ulos* ¹ 'Me was taken out'.

The third characteristic is that the Finnish passive refers to people only. The action expressed by the passive is always originated by an indefinite person or by an indefinite group of persons. The instigator may also be God (see Penttälä 1963:470-1 and Hakulinen 1968:455). Action brought about by, for example, natural forces cannot be referred to by the passive. Thus (1c), which is the literal translation of (1a)¹, is ungrammatical.²

(1a) The roof of the house was blown away.

(1b) Tuuli puhalsi talosta katon. ('The wind blew...')

(1c) ³Talosta puhallettiin katto.³

The Finnish passive also differs from its English counterpart in that it does not tolerate a surface agent. Sentence (2a) has to be translated by an equivalent in the active because it contains an agent.

(2a) Bill was killed by John.

(2b) John tappoi Billin. ('John killed Bill.')

Siro (1975:35-9) maintains, however, that a sentence with a predicator complement like (2c) corresponds to (2a) almost morpheme for morpheme. The correspondence between (2a) and (2c) is close, but the importance and frequency of this construction in the economy of Finnish is not at all similar to that of the passive in English. Besides, these two sentences have a difference in meaning. The English sentence emphasizes the action, killing, whereas in the Finnish sentence the stress is on the state of affairs, on the fact that Bill is dead. (2a) and (2c) cannot be considered translation equivalents.

¹ The letter (a) is reserved for the original sentence, (b) for the corresponding sentence in the other language.

² Most of the English examples are from P. Bromhead, *Life in Modern Britain*; G. Greene, *Our Man in Havana*; G. Greene, *Collected Stories*; A. Hailey, *Hotel*; A. Hailey, *Wheels*; A.H. Marckwardt, *American English*; I. Murdoch, *An Accidental Man*; J. Steinbeck, *The Wayward Bus*; J. Steinbeck, *Cannery Row*; J. Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*; *Time*, September 11, October 2, 1972.

³ In colloquial Finnish this sentence means 'The roof of the house was stolen', which implies a human agent.

(2a) Bill was killed by John.

(2c) Bill oli Johnin tappa-ma.

The fifth, and from the point of view of the present paper the most striking, characteristic of the Finnish passive is that both transitive and intransitive verbs can occur in the passive, which is not possible in English.

The Finnish passive is a means of making a statement without specifying the originator, the agent, of the action. In this function the passive is closely related to the subjectless 3rd person singular with a generalizing force¹, (also called the generic 3rd person singular). Consider sentence (3a).

(3a) Häntä luulee nuoremaksi kuin hän onkaan.

(3b) One considers [you consider] him younger than he actually is.

The verb form *luulee* in (3a) conveys the meaning that anyone who meets the man considers him younger than he in fact is, whereas (3c) with the verb in the passive (*luullaan*) denotes that there are people who think he is younger than he actually is.

(3c) Häntä luullaan nuoremaksi kuin hän onkaan.

The pronominal reference of the verb form *luulee* is to 'everybody', 'all people', or 'nobody', whereas that of the passive verb is to 'some people', 'many people' (Penttilä 1954:108 and 1963:464). As the reference of *luulee* is to 'everybody', 'all people', it naturally includes the speaker as well, as does the English indefinite subject *one*. The subjectless 3rd person singular is often used instead of the 1st person singular when the speaker wants to be modest or when he wants to give a generic tone to his statement. The Finnish passive does not seem to occur in this function.

¹ For a description of this construction see Penttilä (1954) and Hakulinen (1974).

INDEFINITE SUBJECTS IN ENGLISH

As pointed out above, both transitive and intransitive verbs can occur in the passive in Finnish, whereas in English only transitive verbs can normally be passivized. In Finnish, subjectless sentences like (4a) are possible, while the partially congruent English sentence (4b) is unacceptable.

(4a) Talossa tanssitaan. ('They are dancing in the house.')

(4b) *In the house is danced.

In English sentences there must always be a surface subject, e.g. one of the indefinite subjects *they*, *people*, *we*, *you*, or *one*. These subjects correspond closely to the Finnish passive since it implies a human instigator of the action. The German *man* and the French *on* are related to the indefinite subjects in English. *They*, *people*, *we*, *you* and *one* have, however, their specific references; they are seldom interchangeable.

They (5a) and *people* (6a) refer to people in general; *they* definitely excludes the speaker and the person(s) addressed, while *people* may include the speaker.

(5a) *They* say he made a fortune in Hong Kong.

(6a) I had stuck closely to him, as *people* say like a shadow.

Both *they* and *people* are employed to refer to a community, as in (7a) and (8a). This usage is sometimes motivated by the lack of a suitable noun for the people belonging to a given community (9a). *People* is neutral in tone (cf. 8a), whereas *they*, which excludes the speaker and the hearer, may also carry a derogatory meaning (cf. Bryant 1962:212), as in (10a).

(7a) *They* manage in Bermuda fine without cars.
(*they* = the Bermudians)

(8a) In Scotland *people* are inclined to prefer Scottish papers to those sent from England.

(9a) *They* are not going to thank you at Solidarity House if you let this thing get away from us.
(*they* = the trade union people)

(10a) You don't know about the old road that was there before *they* put in those damn-fool bridges.
(*they* = people responsible for constructing public roads)

Translations (7b) and (8b), in which the Finnish passive is used, illustrate how the indefinite subjects *they* and *people* correspond to the

Finnish passive.

- (7b) ...Bermudassa pärjätään hienosti ilman autoja.
 (8b) Skotlannissa ollaan taipuvaisia pitämään skottilaisia lehtiä parempina kuin englantilaisia.

Apart from the passive, the pronoun *they* in the function of an indefinite subject may correspond to an active construction with *ne* (3rd person plural personal pronoun used, in standard Finnish, of animals and things only) as the subject in colloquial Finnish. Consider the following translations:

- (9b) *Ne ei kyllä paljon kiittele sinua liitossa, jos lasket tämän jupakan karkaamaan käsistämme.*
 (10b) *Te ette tiedä, että on olemassa vanha tie, jota käytettiin ennen kuin ne rakensi nuo kirotut typerät sillat.*

Translations (9b) and (10b), which are clearly colloquial in tone, are closer to the originals than corresponding passive translations (*ei kiitellä; rakennettiin*). *Ne* is an especially suitable equivalent of *they* whenever *they* has a derogatory force.

We, *you*, and *one* differ from *they* and *people* in that they often refer to people in general, even *you*, in many cases, including the speaker. Consider examples (11a) and (12a).

- (11a) If one thinks solely in terms of total numbers of speakers, it must be conceded that some authorities place Chinese...ahead of English.
 (12a) ...Of course you throw away the bait if it is no good.

The Finnish passive translates these sentences accurately, as illustrated by (11b) and (12b).

- (11b) Jos ajatellaan vain puhujien kokonaismäärää, täytyy myöntää, että...
 (12b) ...Tietenkin syötti heitetään menemään, ellei sillä tee mitään.

Being generic in force, the indefinite subjects *we*, *you*, and *one* quite often correspond to the Finnish subjectless 3rd person singular with a generalizing force (13ab). This construction gives the sentence a tone of general validity.

- (13a) I went to Carmel Valley where once we could shoot a thirty-thirty in any direction. Now you couldn't shoot a marble knuckles down without wounding a foreigner.
 (13b) Menin Carmelin laaksoon, missä ennen vanhaan voi ampua metsästyskiväärillä mihin suuntaan hyvänsä. Nyt siellä ei voisi ampua rit-

soilla marmorikuulaa haavoittamatta muukalaista.

In addition to the passive and the subjectless 3rd person singular, we may sometimes correspond to the pronoun *me* (1st person plural personal pronoun) in Finnish (cf. examples 14ab). In instructions given in colloquial Finnish it is possible to use the 2nd person singular (15ab) instead of the passive. (This use of the 2nd person singular seems to be spreading in Finnish, possibly under English influence.)

- (14a) It was the doctors who called his complaint *borborygmi*; in England we usually call it 'tummy rumbles'.
- (14b) Lääkärit kutsuivat hänen vaivaansa *borborygmiksi*, *me* kutsumme sitä Englannissa tavallisesti 'mahan murinaksi'.
- (15a) When your brake is gone, you can use reverse as a brake.
- (15b) Kun sinulta menee jarrut, voit käyttää pakkia jarruna.

They and *you* seem to be the most frequent indefinite subjects in spoken language, but in written language, for example in the language of the press, they occur rather seldom. *People* is employed when a state of things is viewed from outside (cf. example (8a) in which an Englishman writes about Scottish reading habits). *One*, which often implies the speaker, is felt to be rather formal in tone and it is avoided in colloquial language, apart from the cases in which *you* would be too personal towards the hearer. *We* is often generic but it can also be used to refer to a community in the same way as *they* and *people*. It is not always easy to tell whether *we* is referring to indefinite people or whether it is used as a personal pronoun proper (1st person plural).

As there are five indefinite subjects available, the speaker is faced with a choice, which is conditioned by the speech situation. The German *man* and the French *on* are *passé partout* whereas in English the speaker gives an interpretation of the various parameters every time he uses one of the five indefinite subjects (Clas 1968:69).

THERE+BE+NP

Apart from the indefinite subjects, there is the construction *there+be+NP* can be used to fill the empty subject slot.¹ Thus the sentence

¹ The *there+be+NP* construction is not, however, as independent as the constructions with indefinite subjects (*they*, *people*, etc.). The space or time in which the action expressed by *there+be+NP* takes place has to be either explicitly mentioned in the sentence or at least deductible from the context.

Talossa tanssitaan can be translated by *There is dancing in the house*, which expresses the mere existence of dancing in a given place. This 'existential' construction leaves the agent of the action unspecified, as does the Finnish passive. It is to be noted, however, that the noun phrase in the construction *there+be+NP* need not necessarily refer to a human instigator of the action. The NP *barking* in (16a) denotes, for example, that the action is performed by a dog or by several dogs. Consequently, it cannot be translated by the passive in Finnish.

- (16a) *There is barking* in the house.
 (16b) *Koirat haukkuvat talossa/Talosta kuuluu koiran haukuntaa*/**Talossa haukutaan*.
 ('Dogs are barking in the house/*The house- from hears dog's barking/ The house- in is barked.)

The *there+be+NP* construction is especially common where cognate languages like German and Swedish employ the impersonal passive: *Es wurde getanzt*; *Det dansades*. The impersonal passive does exist in English but its use is restricted to verbs denoting saying, thinking, or stating (cf. Kirchner 1970:536, 541). Moreover, the introductory *it* always refers to a subject clause introduced by *that*, to a gerund, or to an infinitive (*It is said that Bill is a rich man*). If the above conditions are fulfilled, the two constructions are interchangeable but there are often some minor differences in meaning. In some cases *there+be+NP* makes it possible for the speaker to say something about the number of the entity referred to by the NP (17a); this is not possible when using the impersonal passive (17c).

- (17a) *There is a rumour* that Bill has an illegitimate child.
 (17c) *It is rumoured that* Bill has an illegitimate child.

One reason for the frequent use of the *there+be+NP* instead of the corresponding passive may be the fact that a modifier like *some* is far more common with nouns (*there+be+some+NP*) than *somewhat*, *to some extent*, *to some degree*, etc. with verbs (Mihailović 1971:93-5). The passive transform of (18a) sounds slightly odd.

- (18a) */In English grammar schools/...there is some attempt to promote a sense of belonging to an institution which consists of more than classroom work.*
 (18c) *?...it is attempted to some extent to promote a sense of belonging to an institution...*

The noun phrase in the *there+be+NP* construction is capable of taking a considerable number of modifiers (like appositives and clauses; cf. Walters 1975:96-7); a passive subject is not extendable to the same degree. Furthermore, *there+be* can be followed by as many as three NP's and the sentence remains easily comprehensible and fluent. The corresponding passive sentences are often heavy, with many subjects and many *be+past* participle constructions. Consider the pair (19a) and (19c).

- (19a) Among central bankers, finance ministers and star economists who attend such gatherings, *there will be competition* for national victories, *much talk* of gold and *loud complaints* about the rules of the game.
- (19c) ?Among central bankers...who attend such gatherings, national victories *will be competed for*, gold *will be talked* a lot about and the rules of the game *will be loudly complained about*.

There is also a difference in emphasis. The passive emphasizes the subject, the word *contents* in (20c), whereas in the construction *there+be+NP* it is the NP (*discussion*) that receives the main stress. The *there+be* prepares the hearer to anticipate something important to come (Walters 1975:97).

- (20a) *There was a brief discussion* of its contents...
- (20c) *Its contents were briefly discussed*...

The Finnish passive and the *there+be+NP* construction correspond to each other as long as the NP's are related to actions performed by people (consider items (17b) and (20b)). When the emphasis of the *there+be+NP* is primarily on what is heard, not on what is said or done, it requires in Finnish the use of an 'auxiliary' verb such as the verb *kuulla* 'be heard', as illustrated by the pair (21a) and (21b).

- (17b) *Huhutaan*, että Billillä on avioton lapsi.
- (20b) Sen sisällyksestä käytiin lyhyt keskustelu.
- (21a) Around the horseshoe table *there were* several murmurs of assent.
- (21b) Hevoskenkäpöydän ympäriltä *kuului* useita myöntäviä *murahduksia*.

Apart from the passive, the *there+be+NP* can sometimes correspond to a Finnish construction which expresses the mere existence of a state of things, as in (17b'9).

- (17b') *On esiintynyt huhuja/on ollut huhuja*, että Billillä on avioton lapsi.
('Has appeared rumours/has been rumours/that...)

If the reference of a sentence with *there+be+NP* is to 'everybody', 'all people', its equivalent in Finnish is the subjectless 3rd person singular with a generalizing force. This is often the case with the construction *there+be+no+Gerund*, as illustrated by the pair (22ab).

- (22a) *There is no getting along with John.*
 (22b) *Johnin kanssa ei tule toimeen.* ('With John one does not get along.')

(22a) can also be rendered by the passive (*ei tulla toimeen*) but the 3rd person singular clearly fits the context better than the passive translation. This is perhaps due to the fact that the 3rd person clearly implies the involvement of the speaker in the statement whereas the passive does not have this meaning. When the speaker uses the subjectless 3rd person singular, he generalizes his own opinion about John. The passive construction implies that people in general (here excluding the speaker) do not get along with John. The choice between these two expressions depends on the speech situation and also on the type of the verb. It seems that in connection with a modal verb like *voida* ('to be able to') the difference in reference between the 3rd person singular and the passive is neutralized to some extent. Consider the translations of (23a). (Cf. also the pair (25ab) and the footnote on verbs of capability on p.)

- (23a) He had a few faithful clients. But *there was no denying* business was rotten.
 (23b) Hänellä oli muutamia uskollisia asiakkaita. Mutta liikeasiat sujuivat huonosti, sitä ei voinut kieltää. ('...one could not deny...')
 (23b') ...sitä ei voitu kieltää.
 ('but the fact that business was rotten could not be denied.')

INSTRUMENTAL, LOCATIVE, AND OBJECTIVE SUBJECTS

The Finnish passive often corresponds to an English active construction with an Instrument, Locative, or Objective in the function of the surface subject.¹

¹ The cases and their definitions are based on the Fillmorean model of case grammar as presented in Fillmore (1968) and (1971). In addition to Fillmore, the theoretical framework of case grammar has also been developed by John Anderson (1971), whose theory has recently been applied to Finnish by Paavo Siro (1975) in his pioneering work *Sijakielioppi*.

These subjects, when they are used with verbs which are usually associated with people, imply an Agentive, the human instigator of the action, as does the Finnish passive.

The case frame for verbs like *svittaa*, *murhata*, *koputtaa*, *kansallistaa*, *puida*, and *avata* in the active is [0(I)A]¹. But in contrast, the frame for the corresponding English verbs *play*, *murder*, *knock*, *nationalize*, and *thresh* is [0(I)A]. Consider the pair (24ab) for the difference between English and Finnish. The frame for the verb *open* is [0(I)(A)], i.e. only Objective is obligatory (*The door opened*).

- (24a) *Knuckles rapped on the office door outside.*
 (24b) *Toimiston oveen koputettiin rystysillä.*
 ('On the office door was knocked with knuckles.')

(24b') **Rystysel koputtivat toimiston oveen.*

The major difference between Finnish and English is that an Agentive is obligatory in Finnish (thus (24b') is ungrammatical), whereas in English it is optional, since the Instrument case always implies an Agentive (cf. Nilsen 1973:66). The Finnish expressions corresponding to the English frame [0I(L)(T)] have the verb in the passive, which implies an Agentive.

In Finnish, the element corresponding to the English Instrument appears in the adessive case (-lla), which indicates instrumentality. Sometimes the reference of Instrument subjects is to 'everybody', 'all people'. In this case the expressions are also often translatable by the subjectless 3rd person singular. The final choice depends on the context and on the relationship between the speaker and the topic. Moreover, it

¹ This frame means that the verb appears in the context of an Agentive and Objective, Instrument being an optional element, indicated by the brackets (i.e. *John avasi oven* (avaimella), but not **Avain avasi oven*). If two pairs of brackets are linked, as in the frame for the verbs *play*, *murder*, etc., it means that at least one of the elements thus bracketed must be chosen, in this case either the Agentive or the Instrument (i.e. *John opened the door*, or *The key opened the door*). For notation, see Fillmore (1968:27-8). Case frames have been discussed for example in Zimmermann (1972:171-5).

is often necessary to add a modal verb indicating capability.'

- (25a) *This machine'll thresh any kind of grain...*
 (25b) *Tällä koneella voi/voidaan/puida millaista viljaa hyvänsä...*
 ('With this machine one can thresh...')

Sentences like (26a) and (27a), which have Locative as the surface subject, seem to be fairly common in English, while in the Finnish language Locative subjects are not usually allowed with verbs which express actions performed by people, (26b) and (27b). In English, the Agentive is implicit in the Locative, whereas in Finnish it must be implied by the passive.

- (26a) *A notice in Spanish and bad English forbade the audience to molest the dancers.*
 (26b) *Eräässä ilmoitustaulussa...kiellettiin yleisöä ahdistamasta tanssijoita.*
 ('In a notice... was forbidden from molesting the dancers.')
- (27a) *...a message from Adam...announced that he would be delayed.*
 (27b) *Adamilta tullessa sanomassa ilmoitettiin, että hän myöhästyi.*
 ('In the from Adam arrived message was announced that he would be delayed.')

It is to be admitted, however, that sentences with Locative subjects are also gaining ground in Finnish, especially in the language of news media. This development is partly explainable by the fact that it sometimes makes no difference whether the Agentive (*komitea* in (28a)) or the Locative (*mietintö* in (29a)) is made the subject or whether the Agentive is implied by the passive, as in (30a).

- (28a) *Komitea esittää mietinnössään, että...*
 (28b) *The committee proposes in the report that...*
 (29a) *Komitean mietintö esittää, että...*
 (29b) *The report of the committee proposes that...*

1 For a similar situation in English, consider the passive (25c) and the indefinite subject (25d) transforms of sentence (25a).
 (25c) *Any kind of grain can be threshed with this machine.*
 (25d) *You (one, we) can thresh any kind of grain with this machine.*
 This phenomenon, which also applies to German (*Man kann wieder auf unserer Klavier spielen* for *Our piano plays again*; Zimmermann (1972: 175-6)), might deserve further study.

(30a) Komitean mietinnössä esitetään, että...

(30b) It is proposed in the report of the committee that...

There is an interesting difference between sentences (31a) and (32a). This difference also seems to be valid for Finnish.

(31a) Newspapers do not advertise X-movies.

(32a) X-movies are not advertised in newspapers.

(31b) Sanomalehdet eivät mainosta X-luokan elokuvia.

(32b) X-luokan elokuvia ei mainosteta sanomalehdissä.

Both (31a) and its equivalent in Finnish, (31b), imply that it is the policy of the newspapers not to accept advertisements for X-rated films, while (32a) and (32b) mean that there are no advertisements for X-movies in newspapers, which may be due to the fact that the cinemas showing these films do not advertise them in this way. The passive constructions in (32a) and (32b) have a more general meaning than that of (31a) and (31b): they are applicable if it is not known why there are no advertisements for X-rated movies in newspapers. Consequently, the difference between the active and the passive constructions is that the active specifies the originator of the action (the newspapers) while the passive leaves the originator unspecified, thus approaching in meaning the existential *There are no advertisements for X-movies in newspapers* (cf. the chapter on *there+be+NP*).

The third deep case to appear as a surface subject is the Objective. Combined with a limited number of medio-passive verbs, this case allows subjectivalization. Sentences having Objective subjects (*The book sells well*) can be said to be 'process-oriented', while the corresponding passive sentences are 'agent-oriented' (Halliday 1967:47). In not allowing Objective subjects, the Finnish language is 'agent-oriented'. There is one notable exception, however, under the influence of English and other Germanic languages the verb *myydä* ('sell') can be combined with an Objective subject, as in *Tämä kirja myy hyvin* for *Tämä kirja menee hyvin kaupaksi*.

The Instrument is employed as a surface subject when the speaker or writer wants to emphasize the instrument used, not the object (as is the case with the passive). Locative subjects are employed to emphasize the written work, not the author, and to stress the actual written work, not the object of the sentence which would become the theme if the sentence

were in the passive. The use of the Objective as a surface subject offers a means of saying something about the quality of an object.

EVENTS AND ACTIONS

Occasions such as meetings, races, and parties presuppose the presence of people and are thus primarily regarded as actions in Finnish. In English, however, they are considered events. With reference to expressions like (33ab) and (34ab), the English language can be said to be 'event-oriented' in contradistinction to Finnish, which can be said to be 'action-oriented' (for terms, see Lyons (1969:348, 366); also Long and Long (1971: 289) talk about events and actions). The 'event-oriented' expressions in English fall into two categories on the basis of the passive transformations they allow. On the one hand, these expressions refer to occasions such as parties, meetings, and races, which, if expressed by using the passive, require the use of the verb *be held* (or some similar verb), as in (33c). On the other hand, there are expressions which are transformable into the passive by employing the verb *be made* (or some other verb related in meaning), as in the pair (34a) and (34c).

(33a) The conference *will take place* next week.

(33b) Konferenssi *pidetään* ensi viikolla.

(33c) The conference *will be held* next week.

(34a) Purchases *were* in names of individuals...

(34b) Ostot *tehtiin* yksityisten ihmisten nimissä...

(34c) Purchases *were made* in names of individuals...

Some of the 'event-oriented' expressions may correspond to an 'event-oriented' expression in Finnish, but, in the main, the Finnish language employs the passive, which clearly indicates that the originator of the meeting, party, or purchase is a person or that the occasion is attended by people. In this respect, the English language can be said to be less differentiating than Finnish. Comparison of the pair *The meeting took place yesterday* and *The accident took place yesterday* shows that the same verb and voice are employed to refer to an occasion which presupposes an Agentive and to an event which does not. The Finnish language makes a clear distinction here: *Kokous pidettiin eilen* 'The meeting was held yesterday' vs. *Onnettomuus tapahtui eilen* 'The accident happened yesterday'.

TEACHING THE EQUIVALENTS OF THE FINNISH PASSIVE

As the semantic area covered by the passive in Finnish is split into many different parts in English, the Finnish learner of English is faced with a choice. In most cases the Finnish passive corresponds to the English passive with *be* plus past participle, which, being entirely different from its Finnish counterpart, causes many learning problems. It may well be that Finnish learners may try to avoid it. The long passive especially (*Bill was killed by John*), which is non-existent in Finnish, is felt to be odd. Instead of the passive the learners employ, if possible, the active with a definite subject. If there is no definite subject available, it is common to use one of the indefinite subjects (*they, people, we, you, and one*).¹

They and *you* as indefinite subjects are fairly easy for a Finn to learn as they have congruent indefinite subjects in colloquial Finnish, namely the pronouns *he* and *sinä*. *You* in this function, however, sometimes causes erroneous reactions. When a Finnish learner is asked, for example, *How do you spell the word 'through'?*, he often takes the question too personally, answering *I spell it 't-h-o-r-o-u-g-h'*. When teaching the indefinite subjects, proper care must be taken to point out their individual meanings and uses.

Intransitive verbs do not as a rule occur in the passive in English but as a result of the few cases in which they do, they are often excessively passivized. On the analogy of expressions like (35a), Finnish learners tend to form ungrammatical sentences like (36b).

(35a) *It is suspected that Bill is a rich man.*

(35b) *Epäillään, että Bill on rikas mies.*

(36a) *Etelä-Afrikassa taistellaan ankarasti.*

(36b) ⁺*It is fought sharply in South Africa.*

It should be emphasized to the learner that the impersonal passive can be formed only from a limited number of verbs which are followed by a subject

¹ This is often strengthened by textbook material. For instance, the learners of English who employ the series of textbooks titled *Say it in English* by Oksanen *et al.* get a lot of practice in the use of these expressions as the passive proper is not introduced until the last part of the series, i.e., in the seventh year of learning English.

clause, gerund, or infinitive. As it is often difficult to decide whether the verb in question refers to saying, thinking, or stating, the learner should be advised to use the *there+be+NP* construction instead.

The Finnish language does not, generally speaking, tolerate Instrumental, Locative, or Objective subjects with verbs which are usually associated with people. But as these expressions seem to be fairly frequent in English, especially in the language of the press, it is worth while making the advanced student aware of this turn of speech, which in many cases contributes to the compactness of expressions by replacing the passive, personal or impersonal.

The learning of verbs requiring an Objective subject (*The book sells well*) may be facilitated by the fact that this construction has also come to be used in Finnish with the verb *myydä*, which perhaps helps the student to realize the meaning of other related expressions.

Expressions like *The meeting will take place next week* may be pointed out to the student at the same time, stressing the fact that over-indulgence in verbs like *take place*, *be*, and *happen* at the cost of the passive construction with full verbs (*be held*, *be made*) may result in a colourless, dry style.

FUTURE FIELDS OF INQUIRY

What makes the study of the Finnish passive and its equivalents in English difficult is the fact that one always has to account for the subjectless 3rd person singular with a generalizing force. The Finnish passive and the subjectless 3rd person singular cover very much the same semantic area. Of the categories discussed above it occurred in all but the category of events and actions (cf. examples (13ab), (22ab), (23ab) and (25ab)). Moreover, it may correspond to the English passive proper, as in the pair (37a) and (37b).

(37a) This woman cannot be put up with.

(37b) Tätä naista ei voi sietää.

As these two constructions are so closely related, they should together form the point of departure for future contrastive studies on voice systems. They could be termed either 'the indefinite agent in Finnish'. The infinite passive, as in (*sairaus on*) *hoidettava* 'the disease has to be treated' or 'you have to treat the disease', should also be taken into

consideration as well as the voice system of the unipersonal verbs like *pitää, täytyy* (both verbs have the meaning 'must'), and *kannattaa* 'be worth -ing'.

It would be extremely useful to reverse the topic of the present paper, that is, to study the equivalents of the English passive in Finnish. Among the many differences, it would be very interesting to see how the agent (by plus agent)¹ and passive sentences with agents other than people are expressed in Finnish. Besides, a study of this kind might also shed some light on the distribution of the Finnish passive and the subjectless 3rd person singular.

¹ So far work on this subject has been very tentative. There is a short discussion on the topic in Siro (1975:35-9). The translation of English passive sentences into Finnish is briefly discussed in Itkonen-Kaila (1974).

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